

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 SCCT-02 SCS-03 SCA-01 PM-07

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL ASMARA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 176026

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, CDUSC, ET

SUBJECT: TENNECO FOUR

REFS: (A) ADDIS 9454; (B) KHARTOUM 1855; (C) KHARTOUM 1862

(D) ADDIS 9484

1. DEPT IS SOMEWHAT ENCOURAGED BY TENOR OF ZEIN'S REACTION TO RECENT MEETINGS WITH BOGAN AND GRAHAM (KHARTOUM 1855), AND LIKE TENNECO, IS HOPEFUL THAT IEG WILL MAKE AT LEAST SOME DEGREE OF POSITIVE RESPONSE ON QUESTION OF RELEASE OF PRISONERS. IT APPEARS THAT THIS MAY BE RIGHT TIME PSYCHOLOGICALLY TO INDUCE ADDITIONAL FORWARD MOVEMENT BY ELF, HOPEFULLY TO POINT THAT THEY ARE WILLING TO RELEASE SHORTLY ALL REMAINING HOSTAGES.

2. ACCORDINGLY, YOU SHOULD INFORM FONMIN ZEWDE OR OTHER APPROPRIATE IEG OFFICIAL IMMEDIATELY THAT AN EARLY POSITIVE IEG RESPONSE TO ELF DEMANDS AS SET FORTH IN REFS B AND C IS
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HIGHLY DESIRABLE. YOU SHOULD ADD UNLESS YOU SEE SERIOUS

OBJECTION THAT TENNECO HAS REACHED DECISION TO SHUT DOWN ITS OPERATIONS IN ETHIOPIA BUT THAT DEPT HAS PERSUADED THEM TO DELAY TAKING THIS STEP PENDING IEG'S RESPONSE AND DEVELOPMENTS IN NEXT SEVERAL DAYS. IF RESPONSE IS NEGATIVE OR IF THERE IS INORDINATE DELAY IN RECEIVING IT, IT SEEMS FAIRLY CERTAIN THAT TENNECO WILL PROCEED TO CLOSE UP SHOP. THIS TENTATIVELY PROJECTED CLOSURE SHOULD NOT BE PRESENTED AS ELEMENT IN NEGOTIATIONS OR A MEANS OF PRESSURE ON IEG

BUT AS ARISING SOLELY FROM TENNECO'S CONCERN FOR ITS EMPLOYEES, AS DID EVACUATION OF TENNECO DEPENDENTS. ALL CONCERNED ARE HOPEFUL, HOWEVER, THAT FURTHER MOVEMENT CAN BE MADE IN RELEASE OF TENNECO HOSTAGES WITHOUT NEED OF SUCH DRASTIC ACTION BY TENNECO.

3. FOLLOWING IS BACKGROUND FOR ABOVE INSTRUCTION: IN AUGUST 12 MEETING AT DEPARTMENT CLYDE WILSON OF TENNECO PROPOSED THAT EMBASSY ADDIS INFORM IEG THAT UNLESS POSITIVE REPLY FORTHCOMING FROM IEG WITHIN 72 HOURS TO APPROACHES SET FORTH IN REFS B AND C TENNECO WOULD SHUT DOWN ITS OPERATIONS IN ETHIOPIA. WE PERSUADED HIM THAT SUCH A STEP MIGHT BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AT THIS STAGE AND HE SUBSEQUENTLY AGREED TO THE INSTRUCTION CONTAINED IN PRECEDING PARA .

4. WILSON UNDERSTANDS FACTORS DESCRIBED IN REF D WHICH WERE CONVEYED TO HIM BY TELEPHONE SUBSEQUENT TO OUR MEETING. HE THEREFORE WITHDREW FALLBACK PROPOSAL HE HAD MADE, THAT IEG BE INFORMED ON AUGUST 15 BY EMBASSY THAT TENNECO IS CEASING OPERATIONS, IN ABSENCE RECEIVING POSITIVE IEG RESPONSE. AS THINGS WERE LEFT, TENNECO WILL ASK US TO MAKE THIS STATEMENT TO IEG ONLY AFTER AN APPROPRIATE AMOUNT OF TIME HAS ELAPSED WITHOUT IEG RESPONSE OR A NEGATIVE RESPONSE IS MADE. HE LEFT IT UP TO DEPT AND EMBASSY TO SUGGEST WHAT MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE PERIOD OF TIME. THE TIME INTERVAL APPLIES TO THE IEG DECISION NOT THE ACTUAL RELEASE OF ELF DETAINEES.

5. FYI: SEEMS THAT WILSON CARRYING OUT INSTRUCTIONS FROM HIGHER TENNECO AUTHORITIES TO GET TOUGH. WE
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SUCCESSFULLY MADE POINT THAT A) ULTIMATUM COULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AT THIS TIME BY GETTING IEG'S OR AFCC'S BACKS UP AND CAUSING THEM TO REJECT ELF DEMANDS OUT OF HAND AND B) THAT TENNECO THREAT TO CLOSE UP OR EVENTUALLY TO WITHDRAW MIGHT NOT BE AS POTENT AS MIGHT SEEM SINCE OTHER COMPANIES MIGHT BE GLAD TO STEP IN, AT BETTER TERMS FOR IEG, TO EXPLORE AND EXPLOIT POTENTIALLY GREAT OIL AND GAS DEPOSITS IN ETHIOPIA. WILSON UNDER-

STOOD THIS, BUT FEELS INCREASING PRESSURE MUST BE PUT
ON IEG. WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S REACTION TO WILSON
PROPOSAL. END FYI. KISSINGER

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